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TAGS: [PREL](#) [UNGA](#) [FAO](#) [EFIN](#) [AORC](#) [EAGR](#) [EAID](#) [KUNR](#) [KPKO](#)
UN, NO
SUBJECT: FRANK NORWEGIAN OPINIONS ON OUR UNGA PRIORITIES
AND THE FAO

REF: A. STATE 90254
[1](#)B. STATE 96467

Classified By: Political/Economic Counselor Cherrie Daniels for reasons
1.4(b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Poloff met on September 18 with Lars Petter Henie, Deputy Chief of the UN Section of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) to discuss reftel A on our UNGA priorities and reftel B on FAO zero nominal growth. Henie was very frank in the discussion. He found the food security conference organized by the USG on September 14-15 to be not particularly useful for Norway. He said Norway would support zero nominal growth for the FAO, as the organization seems incapable of reform under Jacques Diouf. And he generally agreed with our UNGA priorities, especially on peacekeeping, gender based violence, UN reform, global health issues, and disarmament. After his recent consultations in Washington with the NSC, Henie said he was a bit concerned that the United States wanted quick results from the UN and ran the risk of disappointment and frustration. End Summary.

FOOD SECURITY CONFUSION

[1](#)2. (C) Henie started off by commenting on a food security conference hosted by the USG that took place on September 14-15. He described the meeting, which he attended, as not particularly useful for Norway. First, he said, the organizers had not coordinated the meeting with the ministerial meeting being arranged by the Secretary next week in New York. Second, he said that countries were asked to give binding pledges for food security and define their contributions, but the people in attendance were only at the senior official level and could not possibly make these decisions. Third, and as a more general matter, he said that an issue the U.S. will have to address in our food security initiative(s) is that it seems as if no one knows exactly how much money is being spent on "food security" because the term remains undefined. He said that the \$20 billion figure used at L'Aquila is meaningless because "no one knows what these dollar amounts signify." He emphasized that even the most senior officials in charge of food aid collected at the September 14-15 meeting did not know what their governments were spending on "food security" projects of one sort or another. Henie said that the U.S. would do the world "a great service" if we could bring clarity to these issues. (Note: The MFA International Development Section did try to develop such figures after a US Embassy demarche in late August. Those figures were passed to EUR/ERA on September 16.)

AGREEMENT ON THE "BROKEN" FAO

[1](#)3. (C) Henie said he can easily agree on our points in ref B

regarding the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). For Norway, he said, zero nominal growth is not an end in itself, but Norway currently sees little that is positive happening at the FAO. Henie said that Norway would make no more voluntary contributions to the FAO budget designed to "jump start" the reform process. When asked what the FAO's most significant problem is, Henie replied, "two words: Jacques Diouf." Director-General Diouf's attitude, said Henie, is "if you want reform, you can pay for it." Norway believes that the FAO needs to be modernized and must work more programatically. "Having 1700 key staff on short term contracts is not conducive either to results or long term planning," Henie said. Norway will no longer engage in or encourage other countries to engage in "soft earmarking" of funds for the FAO, as Norway has lost hope that the FAO can reform itself under its current leadership. Henie said that Norway's two year program cooperation agreement ends this year, and it will not be renewed until 2011 for 2012 implementation, "when Diouf is gone."

POSITIVITY ON OUR UNGA AND BROADER UN PRIORITIES

14. (C) Henie said that he had already reviewed our UN priorities with a senior official whom he described as "Director of the Multilateral Office at the NSC," and Norway was interested to see what the President's "priorities among the priorities" would turn out to be. However, as a general matter, in response to our demarche in ref A, he said that Norway and the United States have "very much the same priorities." He listed five areas of high interest to Norway: (1) Peacekeeping and peace building operations in failed states--Henie said that President Obama's upcoming

meeting on troop contributions is an unprecedented strong signal that this administration takes peacekeeping seriously.

Henie mused that a possible offer of lift capacity and helicopters by the United States would be very, very interesting. (2) The protection of civilians--gender based violence, and women and children caught up in conflict. (3) UN reform--Henie said that the fact that the U.S. paid its UN bill on time this year puts it in a stronger position to strongly advocate for reform. Henie also commented that the recent U.S. suggestion that a Special Representative of the Secretary-General for violence against women be appointed was a clear signal that the U.S. is open to the idea that sometimes, projects that will expand UN spending are OK. (4) Global health issues. (5) Disarmament--Henie said he hoped the Obama administration could "kickstart" negotiations on nuclear disarmament, and the U.S. was sending "very positive signals" which will produce "new opportunities."

"GIVE IT SOME TIME"

15. (C) Henie repeated twice during the conversation that he was somewhat worried that, in the enthusiasm to re-engage with the UN, the U.S. ran the risk of becoming frustrated by the body. "I'm getting the sense that the U.S. wants quick results," he said. Henie commented that some things, such as progress on disarmament, peacekeeping, and gender based violence, could be achieved relatively quickly through U.S. initiatives. But other areas, like UN reform, would be inherently slower.

16. (C) Comment: Henie is a straight shooter with no illusions about the UN's operation or efficacy. His attitude was one of concern on our handling of our food security initiative. It was clear that he was disappointed by what he characterized as our lack of interagency coordination on the message, be he expressed hope that the upcoming ministerial level meeting on the subject on the margins of UNGA (to which Foreign Minister Stoere has still not yet firmly RSVP'd) will help to clarify what we are asking for, and what the term "food security" does and does not mean.

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